

The Semaphore

A Publication of the TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS
Issue 201

Winter 2013



Gateway to North Beach

At the beginning of the 20th century, the intersection of Kearny and Montgomery was called "The Gateway to North Beach". At that time, Columbus Avenue was called Montgomery. The name was changed in 1909.

A GLANCE AT THE NORTH BEACH HISTORICAL, ARCHITECTURAL & CULTURAL SURVEY

San Francisco's beauty, livability and international reputation depend, in part, on preservation of its historic resources. Preservation, in turn, depends on public education and the wide availability, to both City planners, public officials and residents alike, of solid, professionally conducted and accepted historic research.

Over the last 30 years, a number of professionally conducted historic resource surveys have been undertaken in the North Beach/Telegraph Hill neighborhood which helped lead to the creation of the Telegraph Hill Historic District in 1986. Professional studies also led to the creation of the Northeast Waterfront Historic District in 1983 and the Jackson Square Historic District in 1972. A comprehensive effort to survey all of North Beach has been underway for the last 10 years. We are excited to update you about the process and progress and give you a glimpse into our neighborhood's incredible history.

Historic Resource Surveys:

One of the most important historic preservation tools is the historic resource survey - a process of identifying and gathering data on a community's historic resources. Historic surveys form the basis of the City's knowledge about its historic resources.

Pursuant to state and federal standards, professional research begins with the preparation of a historic context statement describing the significant broad patterns of development in an area that may be represented by historic properties. The historic context statement, in turn, is the foundation for identifying and evaluating individual historic properties and districts.

The primary purposes of a survey are to educate the public; guide City planners and officials in project review, planning and development decisions; and potentially facilitate the nomination of historic resources to local, state and national historic registers. In addition, surveys benefit property owners by increasing potential eligibility for tax credits, grants and other preservation incentives such as the Mills Act (reduction in property taxes) and making it possible to request the application of the State Historical Building Code, which promotes a more sensitive and cost effective approach to rehabilitation of historic structures.

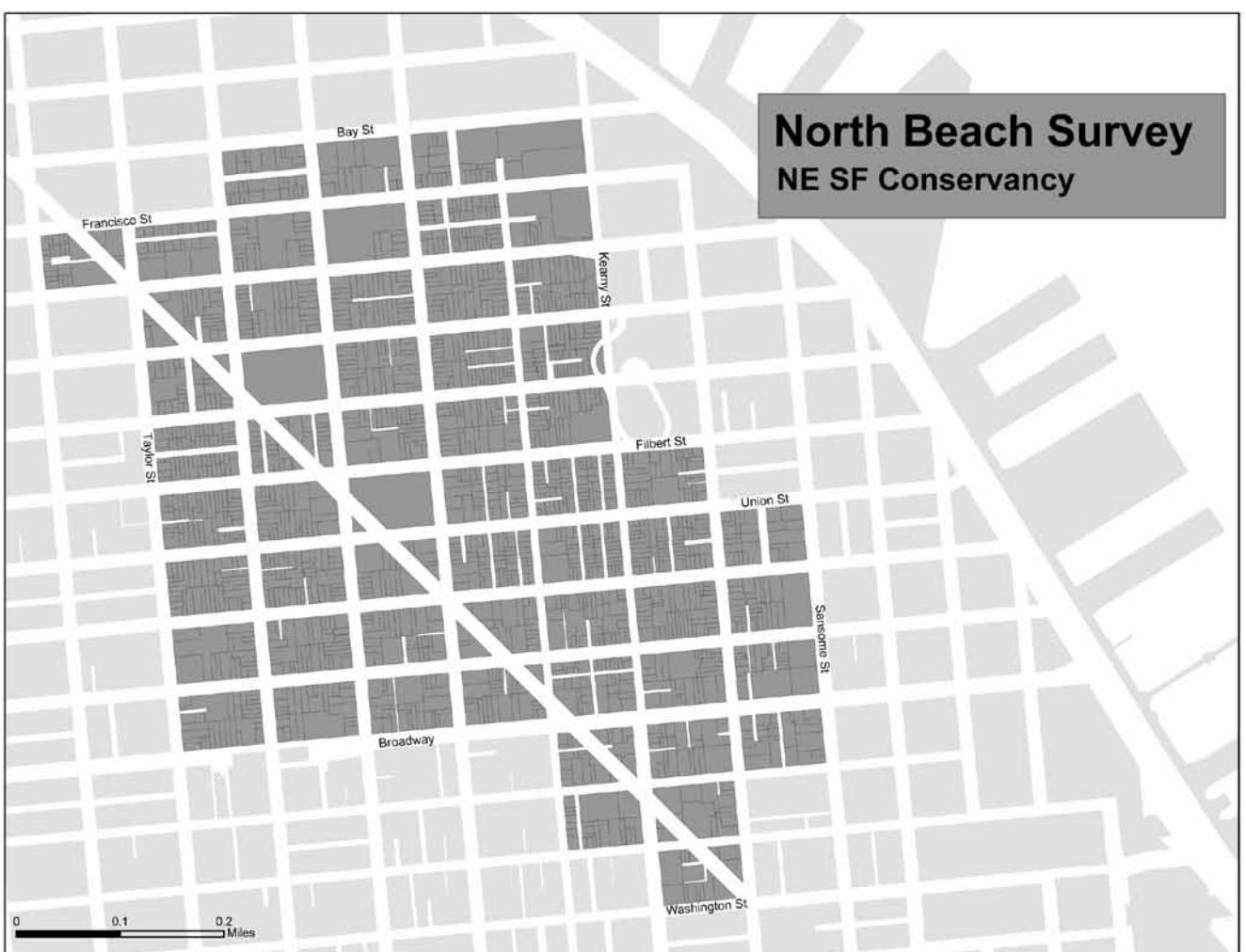
Based on the highly developed field of professional research and evaluation, historic resource surveys -- and the designation of landmarks and historic districts -- should be objective and not subjective or political.

Consistent with the voters' will in amending San Francisco Charter to create an independent Historic Resource Commission composed of professionally qualified individuals (Prop J in 2008), additional landmarks and historic districts should be identified and protected through the survey process.

The North Beach Survey and a Revised Context Statement:

In North Beach, a 2-volume report titled *North Beach San Francisco: An Architectural, Historical Cultural Survey* prepared by Anne Bloomfield, Jean Kortum, and Nancy Olmsted in 1982 ("North Beach Survey") was officially adopted by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1999 as the City's comprehensive record of historical and architectural resources in North Beach. The product of a federal grant conducted by professional architectural historians under formal contract with the California State Office of Historic Preservation, it met both state and federal standards.

Beginning in 1998, efforts to update and expand upon the 1982 survey were first led by the Telegraph Hill Dwellers with the sponsorship of San Francisco Architectural Heritage, and currently by the Northeast San Francisco Conservancy under contract with pre-eminent architectural historian, Michael Corbett. Mr. Corbett has expanded and revised the historic context statement pursuant to the current state guidelines to take advantage of new research and information generated by the earlier phases of the survey. This historic context statement will be the foundation for going forward with the survey of North Beach.



The boundaries of the North Beach survey area have been clarified and expanded — today there are approximately 1,800 individual buildings in the area between Telegraph Hill and Russian Hill, south of the north side of Francisco Street and north of Broadway (except for the south side of Broadway east of Columbus Avenue adjoining the Jackson Square Historic District) and Columbus Avenue south to Washington Street.

As a part of the work for this revised context statement, a database was created sortable by address, architect, contractor, date, original owner, and building type, among others. In addition, data from the 1910, 1920, and 1930 census records of North Beach has been assembled. Together these make it possible to analyze vast amounts of information.

This revised and enhanced historic context statement is soon to be publicly released in its entirety. As a preview, the following is an excerpt from the *North Beach, San Francisco Historic Context Statement*, prepared by Michael Corbett, Architectural Historian:

North Beach: Name and Location

The name, North Beach, and the boundaries of the neighborhood now identified by that name each have a long variable history. The district has been called by other names and its names have sometimes referred to somewhat different areas.

At the time of the Gold Rush, "North Beach" was the name of a section of the shoreline of San Francisco Bay at the north edge of the city. This sandy strip of the waterfront meandered east and west almost one and three-eighths miles between North Point near the present-day corner of Kearny and Bay streets and Point San Jose, later Black Point in Fort Mason. In 1847, the new grid of the city was extended into the water beyond the shoreline of North Beach so that water lots could be sold. From the 1850s to the 1890s North Beach itself was gradually obliterated by maritime facilities, industrial development, and construction of the seawall with landfill behind it. (Dow 1973: 62-63)

Beginning with Henry Meiggs who built Meiggs' Wharf into the bay between Powell and Mason streets in 1853, several property owners and others envisioned a major industrial development of the waterfront along North Beach. A cluster of businesses on and around Meiggs' Wharf, the Pioneer Woolen Mill of 1858, and the Selby Smelting and Lead Company of 1865 were the principle early developments. These businesses generated a demand for housing, resulting in the development of a residential neighborhood south of the north waterfront in the north end of the area between Telegraph and Russian Hills. Photographs from the

mid 1860s show freestanding houses, row houses, and larger buildings that may have been hotels and lodging houses in this area. (Baccari 2006: 17-23)

The shoreline assumed its present form from 1878 to 1893 when sections of the seawall were built across the shallow area of the Bay off of North Beach. Section 1 from Stockton to Kearny was built in 1878-1879, Section A between Powell and Stockton was built in 1879-1880, and Section B between Powell and Taylor was built in 1890-1893. (BSHC 1894: 19) When the area between the old beach and the new seawall was filled, North Beach itself ceased to exist east of Taylor Street; it survived to the west until 1935 when Aquatic Park was built, creating a new man-made beach north of the original shoreline.

According to a historian of the Italians in San Francisco, the name North Beach was first used for this new residential neighborhood in the 1860s: "Because this area was . . . close by a public bathing beach called North Beach, the district itself although removed from the beach became known as North Beach in the early 'sixties,' and has retained this name ever since." (Dondero 1953: 39) A search of newspapers and other early histories did not find any examples of the use of "North Beach" for the neighborhood until 1874, when an *Oakland Tribune* article on San Francisco churches referred to "a Congregational Church in the North Beach part of this metropolis." (*Oakland Tribune* 1874). This was the Fourth Congregational Church of San Francisco at the corner of Green and Stockton streets (Myrick 2001: 162), many blocks south of the north waterfront.

In 1893 the *San Francisco Call* discussed the term: "Many persons included in the term 'North Beach' all that portion of the city north of Union Street between the two points" — the foot of Dupont Street (now Grant Avenue) and Black Point (Fort Mason). (*San Francisco Call*, 23 April 1893). The meaning of "North Beach" was sometimes confused by its continuing usage for at least twenty years after the beach had disappeared to refer to the north waterfront in its new location. (*San Francisco Call*, 8 July 1907; Edwards 1914: 76)

Although some called the area North Beach, others called it by other names with divergent associations, often referring to more limited or somewhat different areas. In the 1850s, portions of the area along Broadway and on nearby blocks, especially on the north side, were called Sydney Town and Chile Town; Montgomery Street was Dago Town. (Bancroft 1888: 170-184; Dillon 1985: 25, 33) "By the late 1850s the community of DuPont Street was known as Little Italy." (Cinel

continued on page 4



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Jon Golinger

From my perspective as president of Telegraph Hill Dwellers, 2012 was a long and colorful year for our neighborhood that I will not soon forget. Before it fades from memory, I want to briefly look back.

The year began for me with a call on January 4th as I was preparing to board a plane back home from visiting family and friends in New York City. The *Chronicle* reporter on the other end of the line said, "Jon, there's apparently a burglar trapped in the cliffs on top of Telegraph Hill. What do the Telegraph Hill Dwellers think and what are you doing about this?"

While we unfortunately didn't catch that burglar (though I came pretty close when I wandered around the area with a flashlight after getting home from the airport — the burglar had quietly slipped away from his hiding spot and eluded police about 30 minutes earlier), that was just the beginning of a very memorable year.

For THD and our neighborhood, 2012 saw some big battles that resulted in big victories: we helped vastly improve the America's Cup deal, keeping the sailing race on track without the need to give away huge swaths of public waterfront land and historic piers for almost nothing; we were part of a coalition that won citywide support for protecting Coit Tower from decay, neglect and over-commercialization while starting efforts to

preserve its historic New Deal-era frescoes for generations to come; and we teamed up with North Beach merchants and other neighborhood groups to force Muni to drop poorly conceived plans for two years of disruptive Central Subway-related construction in the middle of Columbus Avenue.

In 2012, THD also had a long list of lower profile, but equally important, achievements such as creating the most visited exhibit at the San Francisco History Expo in the Old Mint, hosting the fifth annual and increasingly popular North Beach ArtWalk, bringing the THD budget into balance without raising membership dues and transitioning to a new era of *The Semaphore* with a talented new editor, expanded format, and exciting new contributors joining the team.

The THD Board of Directors and membership are a talented and incredibly dedicated group, mixing people who have new energy and creative ideas with those who have a wealth of rich experience dealing with the issues and people that have made the Hill what it is today.

If I learned nothing else last year, in my second term serving as THD president, it's been this: our gorgeous, vibrant, historic neighborhood is loved not just by those of us who are lucky enough to live here, but by the

people of this entire city.

Those old and tired epithets that sometimes get hurled our way — such as the current favorite "NIMBY" — simply don't hold water when you realize that our backyard, Telegraph Hill, is the backyard of this whole city. North Beach and the Hill are considered by residents of every part of San Francisco to be theirs, too, and when we asked them to help us take action to protect it, they did. Witness last June's vote on the Coit Tower Preservation Policy ballot measure, which was easily approved by voters from all across San Francisco despite fears by some that it would be seen as too parochial.

As the city's voters said then, Coit Tower — and all of Telegraph Hill — is worth saving, protecting, beautifying and enjoying because it represents the best of San Francisco.

In 2013 we, as the stewards of this amazing place, will again be given many opportunities to speak out, stand up, celebrate, beautify and do what needs to be done to protect Telegraph Hill. The neighborhood needs it and the rest of the city expects it. I look forward to working with you in the year ahead to again do exactly that.



**Sean O'Donnell
Handyman**

**"Anything can be fixed
except a fallen soufflé."**

307-1205

**The Lilly Hitchcock Coit Memorial
Literary Society**

meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every month.

For more information, contact Carol Peterson at 956-7817.



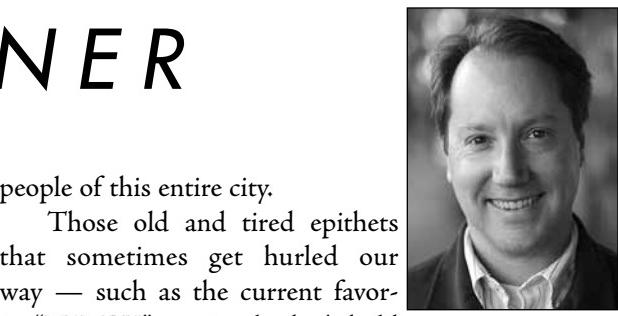
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HISTORIC MEETING OF COIT TOWER FAMILIES AS RESTORATION GETS UNDERWAY



Ruth Gottstein, daughter of Coit Tower mural artist Bernard Zakheim, at Coit Tower meeting with Susie Coit Williams, great-great-great-niece of Lillie Hitchcock Coit.



THD President Jon Golinger showing Susie Coit Williams a letter from her great-great-great aunt Lillie Hitchcock Coit in an educational display at Coit Tower.

On Monday, Nov. 12, 2012, descendants of Lillie Hitchcock Coit gathered at Coit Tower, along with Jon Golinger of the Protect Coit Tower campaign, to raise awareness about the need for continued preservation efforts and to inspect some of the restoration work that has already begun.

The Coit family met relatives of one of the artists who painted the murals inside

the tower. Ruth Gottstein was 11-years-old when her father, artist Bernard Zakheim, painted her in a fresco for posterity. Gottstein met, for the first time, Coit's great-great-great-niece, Susie Coit Williams. They inspected some of the ongoing restoration and repairs of the Great Depression-era murals.

PHOTO CREDITS: BOTH OF THE PHOTOS WERE TAKEN BY THD MEMBER RICHARD ZIMMERMAN



FROM THE DESK OF **SUPERVISOR CHIU**



Happy New Year! I'm excited to start my second term and work with many of you to improve District 3 and San Francisco, and am honored to be re-elected by my colleagues to continue serving as president of the Board of Supervisors. I've already heard from many neighborhood leaders about 2013 priorities that we share — from helping small businesses and ensuring appropriate developments to reducing tenant evictions and finding creative ways to address neighborhood quality-of-life issues. I look forward to hearing more of your ideas and to working together.

"Pagoda Option" for Central Subway Construction

After significant community discussions, my office has been working with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) on a proposal to extract the Central Subway's tunnel-boring machines (TBMs) at the site of the Pagoda Theater instead of in the middle of Columbus Avenue, which would be extremely disruptive. The SFMTA is now in negotiations with the owner of the site, and my office recently introduced legislation related to the process. While there are still challenges to making this alternative a reality, I am cautiously optimistic that we can get a win-win by relocating the construction and removing a neighborhood eyesore at the same time. If you'd like more information, please contact my aide Judson at

judson.true@sfgov.org.

Participatory Budgeting

Late last year, I announced San Francisco's first participatory budgeting pilot program to give District 3 residents the power to vote directly on how to use a portion of discretionary funding from this year's budget. We are in the process of identifying potential project ideas that are a priority to our residents and provide public benefits to our district. Project ideas must be for one-time, non-operational expenditures that are implementable by city departments and cost no more than \$20,000. We encourage all of our district residents and leaders to get involved in this process and help us make the best investments in our neighborhoods. For more information or to take part in our participatory budgeting decision-making process, please contact my aide Amy at amy.chan@sfgov.org.

Broadway CBD and Safety

A group of business owners and residents in the Broadway corridor have been working with my office on a proposal to form a Broadway Community Benefit District (CBD). The CBD, which would have to be approved by a majority of property owners within its boundaries, would create a special assessment district to fund additional services for Broadway, including more security, beautification and marketing/rebranding. We hope to be introducing the CBD legislation in February and soon after initiate the required elec-

tion. We are also working with community members on other proposals to improve the safety on the Broadway corridor. If you'd like more information, please contact my aide Catherine at catherine.rauschuber@sfgov.org.

Jefferson Street Construction Begins as Pier 43 Promenade Is Completed

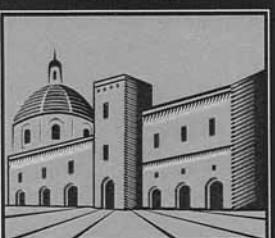
Earlier this month, construction began on the Jefferson Street Improvement Project. Two blocks of Jefferson Street, from Jones to Hyde streets, are getting streetscape improvements to enhance the historic Fisherman's Wharf corridor. The focus is to make this tourist destination and business district safer for pedestrians and residents with newly designed intersections, better street lighting and upgraded crosswalks. The Jefferson Street project follows the completion of another Fisherman's Wharf project, the Pier 43 Promenade, which I celebrated with city officials and wharf community members in December. Funded mostly by the 2008 parks bond, the promenade dramatically improves the pedestrian experience at the wharf while also protecting this much-visited section of shoreline.

In the coming months, I will continue to move legislatively on ordinances introduced last year and will also announce a number of new pieces of legislation. As always, please don't hesitate to contact me or any of my staff with your feedback, questions and ideas.

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North Beach Historical District continued from page 1

1982: 104) From the 1860s to 1880s, Telegraph Hill, where it was cheap to live, was Little Italy (Dillon 1985: 31) and the lower areas of the future North Beach neighborhood were occupied by Spanish, French, Mexican, Italian, Basque, Swiss, Chilean, and Peruvian people, often in their own enclaves abutting one another. "Within a few years Romance languages dominated the district, where the Latin culture clearly set off the area from the rest of the city." (Cinel 1982: 103) Later, there were also Portuguese in the neighborhood. (Edwards 1914: 66)

While Little Italy referred to a portion of the future North Beach neighborhood that included Telegraph Hill, another term appears to have applied to a wider area encompassing all of the Romance language groups. In 1890, the *San Francisco Chronicle* referred to the "Latin Quarter" as the neighborhood from which children came to the North Cosmopolitan School on Filbert near Jones Street. Many of these children had "Italian, Spanish, Mexican, French, and German parents." (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 23 February 1890) In 1892, the *New York Times* referred to "the Latin quarter" in an article on preventing cholera in Chinatown. A search of newspapers from indexes and online sources (California State Library n.d.; California State Library 1904-1950; *New York Times* 1851-1980; *San Francisco Call* 1900-1910; *San Francisco Chronicle* 1865-1922; and newspaper archive.com) as well as early histories and guides to San Francisco (Soule 1966 [1855]; Lloyd 1876; Hittell 1878; Doxey 1881; and Bancroft 1888-1890) did not turn up any earlier uses of the term "Latin Quarter" in San Francisco. In the late nineteenth century, California newspapers commonly used the term to refer to the Left Bank in Paris.

The earliest known discussion of the Latin Quarter was in an 1897 article in *The Wave* by Frank Norris. Curiously, Norris refers to the Quarter and to Latins but never puts the two words together. He describes the district as an "aggregation of 'little' Mexico, Italy and the like that makes a place for itself in San Francisco . . . on the other side of Chinatown and beyond the Barbary Coast." (Norris 1931: 136)

Use of the term Latin Quarter may have been at its peak in the early 1900s. In the April issue of *Overland Monthly*, the last issue before the 1906 earthquake, J.M. Scanland wrote: "There is not a more picturesque spot in California, so noted for its odd corners and medley of nationalities, than the Latin Quarter of San Francisco. Here live the Latins of all States, and subdivisions of States — each nationality separated by a divisional line, unmarked yet distinct." Throughout the neighborhood, he wrote, "Most of the States have different dialects, and the dialects of the subdivisions of a State are different," but they all listened to the Opera in the Tuscan dialect. (Scanland 1906: 327)

At times, the name Telegraph Hill seems to have encompassed the entire North Beach neighborhood, perhaps a consequence of the early settlement of Italians on Telegraph Hill followed by the gradual nineteenth-century movement of the center of the Italian population from the upper parts of Telegraph Hill to DuPont Street (now Grant Avenue) and Washington Square. It may also be because Telegraph Hill doesn't have a shopping district other than what is down the hill in North

Beach. Writing in recent decades about Telegraph Hill, David Myrick said, "The boundaries of Telegraph Hill cannot be defined exactly." For him, Sansome Street is the eastern boundary: "A line just above the entertainment zone on Broadway will serve as the southern edge, while Columbus Avenue and Stockton Street form the western limit, although some people residing as far west as Powell or Mason streets think of themselves as living on Telegraph Hill. Francisco Street now forms the northern boundary of the Hill." (Myrick 2001: 9, 11)

The term "North Beach" was used in the *San Francisco Chronicle* to refer to a neighborhood in the early 1880s, but the neighborhood referred to appears to have been limited to the few blocks south of the waterfront. An 1881 article on "The Real Estate Market" of San Francisco mentioned numerous properties, all north of Lombard Street. (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 18 November 1881) The earliest known unambiguous use of "North Beach" to refer to a larger neighborhood that included at least the area north of Broadway and between Russian and Telegraph hills was in 1892 in an article about an event at the Morrow Club at 638

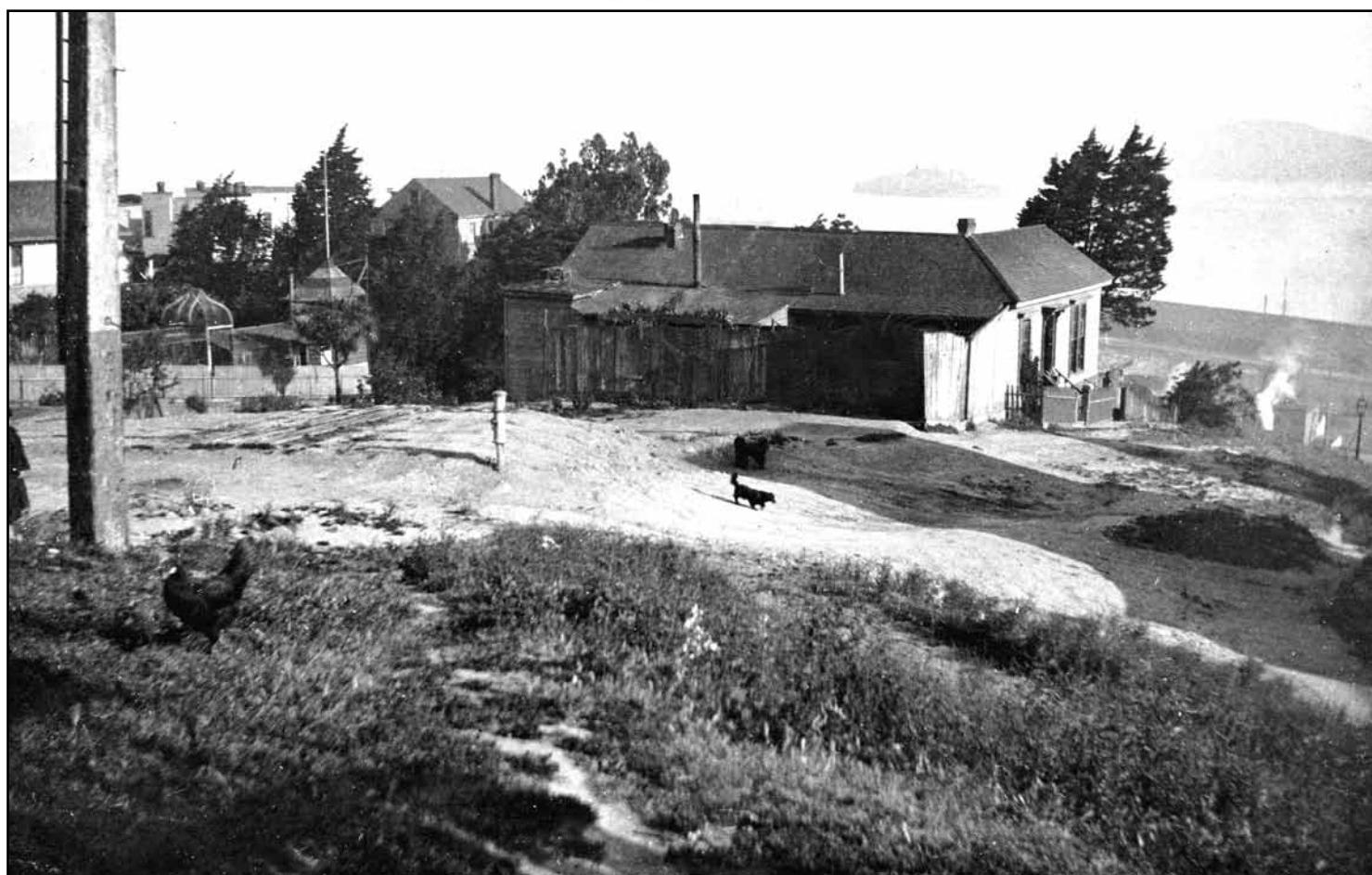
Union Street. (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 17 April 1892)

In the period after the 1906 earthquake and fire, the terms North Beach, Latin Quarter, Little Italy, and even Telegraph Hill were used almost interchangeably. Then, all but North Beach generally dropped out of use for the area as a whole. As it became more expensive, the Italians moved down Telegraph Hill; and as Bohemians first moved up in the 1920s, followed by prosperous elements of the general population of the city who wanted the views, "Telegraph Hill" came to refer to the upper parts of the hill and to its east side while "North Beach" referred to the area between Russian and Telegraph hills, not including the upper parts.

Richard Dillon said that "the Latin Quarter . . . died in the fire of 1906," succeeded by an overwhelmingly Italian population. (Dillon 1985: 162) Cinel took a different view, quoting an Italian observer in 1911: "Even North Beach which is popularly known as



Pioneer Park observatory. Showing Time Ball, maintained by U. S. Hydrographic Office. Circa, 1884



This 1890s image is of an early settlement on Telegraph Hill complete with chickens and dogs.

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JOHN NELSON

The following tribute to John Nelson was provided to the Editor by Jill Fenton and Glenn Kersey

We first met John in 1972 on the 39-Coit bus as he and his German shepherd, Arrow, went off route to Mooney's Irish Pub where John called out, "Tell Charles McCabe it's the last bus." McCabe wrote a column in the Chronicle about "Geography John." (Editor's Note: That article can be found on page 8-9 of this issue of *The Semaphore*.)

He would also go off route on bingo nights to pick up his "bingo ladies" at Saints Peter and Paul Church and

North Beach Historical District continued from page 4

the Latin Quarter, is hardly an Italian enclave." (Cinel 1982: 111) By 1920, however, the Italians unquestionably dominated the neighborhood. This situation lasted through World War II after which the Italians began moving out and the Chinese, Bohemians, and others moved in; "the term Little Italy no longer made sense after World War II." (Dillon 1985: 174)

In 1925, a North Beach businessman suggested changing the name of the neighborhood. Dr. V.C. Quartararo, secretary of the North Beach Merchants' Association was quoted in the *Chronicle*:

There is everything in a name. The North Beach has outgrown its name, and no longer is the district confined to the little beach as it was years ago.

In recent years the public has gained the wrong impression of the North Beach section, and many people think there are no stores or business houses there. In its true character, the district is an important part of the city.

The name "Columbia Valley" would be particularly appropriate, as the district is and always will be populated by people of the Latin race and also because each year the landing scene of the great Columbus Day fete is held on the beach.

Nothing came of this suggestion.

With its different names and its movements of populations, the boundaries of the North Beach neighborhood have always been hard to define, especially in relation to Telegraph Hill. (Dillon 1985: 32; Myrick 2001: 10) Many have said that North Beach was north of the Barbary Coast and Chinatown, and in fact that the stability of these two districts contributed to the northward growth of Little Italy. (Dillon 1985: 51) Thus, North Beach extends north from Broadway except for a panhandle down Columbus Avenue to its beginning at Washington Street. (Dillon 1985: 13)

Insofar as North Beach has been an Italian neighborhood, at its maximum extent it encompassed all that area predominantly occupied by Italians and their businesses. Richard Dillon took this approach in defining Little Italy as having three principle parts: Telegraph Hill, North Beach, and Fisherman's Wharf with "the district satellites" of Italian population in areas of the Potrero, Mission, and Portola districts. (Dillon 1985: 147)

The core of Little Italy could be thought of as including those places frequented on a daily basis by many Italians for work or personal business. Thus, it extended down Columbus Avenue as far as the Bank of Italy at the corner of Montgomery and Clay and the Italian-American Bank at the corner of Montgomery and Sacramento. It extended to the produce market (now generally the site of Golden Gateway Center) where many Italians worked as venders or commission merchants; and at the other end of North Beach to Fisherman's Wharf, itself sometimes called Italy Harbor (Baccari 1985: 37). And it extended to the waterfront and the industrial and warehouse district on the east side of Telegraph Hill where many Italians worked — as laborers at the port or in port-dependent businesses such as the Italian Swiss Colony warehouse at Greenwich and Battery streets.

Dillon described the extreme points of North Beach as follows: The Ghirardelli Chocolate factory "and the nearby bocce ball court near Van Ness

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return them safely to their homes on the Hill. He would never let locals pay bus fare, only tourists. As we climbed up Union or Lombard streets, friends, patrons and those who knew of his loving care, would run out offering brownies, cupcakes or a "hit off the bong." After driving the 39-Coit he was a cable car conductor.

John and his Jeannie were married at the Bayview Boat Club in 1994. (It was also his Muni retirement party). He liked the club so much that he had a video camera trained on the club from his home on Potrero Hill.

He and Jeannie eventually moved to his old

homestead in Madison, Wisconsin, where John grew up. John not only had family, he had a whole city of friends who were family. In our hearts he never retired.

I had a woman on the 39-Coit ask me recently where he was. "He's in heaven driving his bingo ladies safely home." ☺



John Nelson



432. North Beach and Meiggs' Wharf, from Russian Hill, San Francisco.

This is a view of Meiggs' Wharf and North Beach as taken from Russian Hill c. 1866.

PHOTO CREDIT: COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

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VIRGINIA ANDERLINI: A CENTURY ON TELEGRAPH HILL

By Ken Maley

On January 12, many friends and family — some from as far away as New Zealand — gathered at the St. Francis Yacht Club to celebrate the birthday of Virginia Anderlini, who has lived on Telegraph Hill for a century.

Virginia was born on Jan. 14, 1913, at 319 Union Street, next door to Speedy's grocery. Her parents were immigrants from northern Italy. She and her sister walked the upper Filbert Steps to Garfield School past the home that she and her husband would one day own at Filbert and Montgomery. Yes, it is that pink stucco house with the incredible bougainvillea and rose garden that her husband Elios tended lovingly for decades until his death in 2004.

As much as Virginia's sharp memory was evident in her oral history, I was not prepared for how charming she is in real life. Her daughter-in-law, Regan, recently arranged for me to meet Virginia in her Filbert Steps home. Virginia recalled how she gradually befriended, then convinced, its previous owner to sell the home she built for her family.

We met in the room the couple designed for Elios, who was a successful attorney. As Virginia sat poised on the couch, she proudly told me how she took it on herself to rebuild. Elios had wanted a room with a fireplace that was cozy for him to work in. The room is paneled in beautiful redwood with souvenirs collected from their travels and is certainly a room anyone today would love working or relaxing in.

I told Virginia how enjoyable her oral history was, so it was easy conversation to let Virginia recall her special memories. She told me how strict her parents were with her and her sister. How the family would travel around the city and to Marin visiting friends and relatives, and how people would just drop by the house for visits. Her mother always expected friends to arrive unannounced, but she welcomed them. Her mother would have refreshments prepared, including homemade pasta she rolled out on the kitchen table and wine that was pressed in

the basement.

After listening to Virginia list the many places she and her family shopped in North Beach, it will be difficult not to visualize them while walking along Grant (Dupont in her day), most of them now long gone. She paints a vivid picture of Little Italy — including some of the attitudes between the northern and southern Italians.

Virginia recalled not only family activities, but she has a wonderful recollection of sounds such as the clop, clop, clop of horse's hooves on the cobblestones pulling carts up Union Street with produce or ice for the "icebox" and the purveyors calling out their wares. She said she was always aware of the foghorns and she believes it was much fogger in the early 1900s than it is today.

I applaud the THD Oral History Project, although some histories I've read were nowhere near the vivid descriptions of life on the Hill as Audrey Tomaselli's adept interview with Virginia and Elios will provide the reader.

While there is far too wonderful a selection of the Anderlini's memories of life on the Hill than I can recount here, I encourage readers to go to this oral history and read it for yourself. The link to the Virginia and Elios Anderlini oral history is <http://www.thd.org/oral-history-virginia-and-elios-anderlini/>.

You will have a lively and informative read about times long past. Afterward, as you walk around our hilltop neighborhood and North Beach, if you squint and look in the shadows you may well spot a ghost or two, sparked by Virginia and Elios' vivid account of their San Francisco century.

Yes, Virginia Anderlini, is a very special woman and I am so pleased to have met her.

The link to the video/slideshow presented at Virginia's 100th birthday party is <http://youtu.be/VaWYNZmuAIE>.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF REGAN ANDERLINI



PARKING AND TRANSIT REPORT CENTRAL SUBWAY PROJECT UPDATE

By Mike Somm

With the Central Subway's construction ramping up in North Beach last year, the Telegraph Hill Dwellers partnered with the North Beach Neighbors (NBN) to hold the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) accountable to our neighborhood's best interests. THD and NBN sent a joint letter to SFMTA Director Ed Reiskin requesting that the agency honor its commitment to study alternatives to the Central Subway construction plan that would remove the tunnel-boring machines on Columbus Avenue at Washington Square.

As a result of our collaboration, the SFMTA made a presentation to the neighborhood in November regarding several alternatives, one being a plan to acquire and then remove the tunnel-boring machines at the Pagoda Theater site. Reiskin has since made a

recommendation to the SFMTA board to further study the Pagoda option.

There are many questions that still need to be answered with regards to using the Pagoda site, including whether it would be appropriate to comply with the Pagoda owner's demand that the city increase the building height limit at that location above the 40-foot height limit that applies to the rest of North Beach and Telegraph Hill. However, one thing is clear, transit/traffic impacts on Columbus Avenue will be greatly reduced by any of the alternatives under consideration. The plan to remove the tunnel-boring machines on Columbus calls for closing two of its four lanes continuously for the next 18 months during which time San Francisco will play host to the America's Cup.

During the last few months, there has been a lot talk of a North Beach station for the Central Subway.

We must remember that there has been zero planning for a stop in North Beach and preliminary meetings will begin this year. Please pay attention to when these meetings will take place so North Beach's voice will be heard, unlike the original Central Subway planning that left North Beach with disruptive construction and no station.

Another new development in San Francisco is the advent of Sunday parking meter enforcement. This will be a major positive step for our local businesses as street parking in North Beach is limited and many stores and shops are open on Sunday. Let us remember that meters were created to help parking turnover in busy commercial districts, and ours is one of the busiest in the city.



CANESSA PARK GALLERY

By Miriam Owen

Inside and up a flight of extremely well-worn stairs that remind me of the concave marble steps leading to the top of the Leaning Tower of Pisa, resides a curious space, a sky lit open floor and a catwalk another level above it, surrounding the lower floor.

In 1966 architects rented the space for their offices. All had a fondness for the natural world and national parks in particular. They decided to make the open floor Canessa Park, named for the fact that the building once housed the Canessa Printing Company, which remained embossed on the building's façade. The park originally had a fake grass rug and some potted trees. It was only a matter of a few months before the idea to use the 'park' as a gallery space, an original intent, became a reality.

The first artist to stage a show in the park was Phillip Hyde, a landscape photographer. Hyde studied at the California School of Fine Arts, which later came to be called the San Francisco Art Institute. In 1946 Ansel Adams and Minor White were invited to create an art photography program there, the first of its kind in the country. Adams and other notable photographers, including Minor White, Edward Weston, Dorothea Lange and Imogen Cunningham, were the artists Hyde studied under.

Hyde photographed what was later to become Point Reyes National Seashore. His photographs were presented to Congress when the proposal to make it into a National Seashore was presented. Hyde became a photographer for the Sierra Club and photographed several Sierra Club books. He photographed the Green River in Utah and the Grand Canyon in Arizona, when plans were afoot to build dams in Dinosaur National Monument and the Grand Canyon. Hyde, with the support of David Brower, president of the Sierra Club, was at the forefront of the thrust by environmental groups, to protect and expand the national parks and wilderness areas.

The focus of Canessa Park Gallery was formed by early Bay Area environmental artists such as Hyde. Canessa Park became a magnet for the incubating environmental movement of the '60s and '70s. By offering the use of the gallery space to artists and environmentalists, Canessa forged a robust scene, filled with salons and art shows by many of the people behind the Bay Area Environmental Movement.

My first visit to Canessa Gallery found me pausing at the top of the steep stairway, not because I was out of breath, but because on the wall by the entry

to the gallery space, there was a framed statement by Gary Snyder. Snyder was my guide and introduction to wild nature in the '60s, when, as a student at Berkeley, my favorite class, Contemporary American Poetry, assigned us to go to the many poetry readings happening around Berkeley at the time. Snyder made regular appearances reading poems from his musings on the time he spent in the backcountry of the Sierra Nevada. He made me curious. The summer of my 19th year, I left the

city for my first foray into the wilderness. I hiked into the High Sierra back country. I worked at Mono Lake. I never did come back to the city to live after that summer. Seven years ago, I started my part time life here again, and finding a trace of Gary Snyder writing about North Beach where I have settled, seemed quite apt.

"When we of the fifties and after walked into it (North Beach), walk was the key word. Maybe no place else in urban America where a district has such a feel of on-foot: narrow streets, high blank walls and stairstep steeps of alleys..." wrote Snyder capturing the essence of why I love North Beach. He goes deeper, as he would, describing the watershed that existed: 'a tiny watershed divide is at the corner of Green and Columbus. Northward a creek flowed'...

Finding the Gary Snyder statement at Canessa made me think I had found a special place. As it turned out, I learned that indeed Canessa is a place where regional history is considered important, a place where paying attention to environmental issues and art related to those issues all meet. "Nature in the City", a show I participated in, that has run for two years simultaneously with the North Beach ArtWalk, now makes more sense to me in the larger picture of the Canessa story.

Some of the artists who have shown at Canessa have left pieces behind. The mermaid mounted on the wall at the top of the stairway landing, was made by plaster artist Lorna Kollmeyer, who specializes in cast architectural ornament. Lorna's artistry helps restore ornamental detail to historic buildings around San Francisco.

The redwood salmon jutting out from the upper level under the sky light is the work of Jim Growden. Jim is a graduate of the San Francisco Art Institute, an award-winning sculptor, who was one of the first Artists in Residence at Recology in 1988. He maintained a studio on the Embarcadero waterfront working with wood, metal and discarded objects. When he moved to Visitation Valley, he became involved in the green space known as Visitation Valley Greenway, a series of garden spaces created on six lots that were saved from being developed. He helped design ornamentation at the Greenway, and made several of the garden gates



This is the view looking down on the gallery space from the catwalk. On the right we can see the carved redwood salmon by artist Jim Growden.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MIRIAM OWEN

and cut steel images of native flora and fauna that adorn the garden.

Chico MacMurtie, who is recognized internationally for large-scale kinetic installations and interactive public sculpture, and who recently won a \$21 million grant to create a huge climate clock for San Jose, once had a show at Canessa. There was a line a block long outside the gallery, people waiting to get in to see MacMurtie's work. There was a bouncer at the door letting people in two at a time and only as people left.

Hundreds of artists from all over, over a span of nearly 50 years, have been invited to show their artwork at Canessa. The art has not always been limited to nature themes. Each artist, or group of artists, has enjoyed the freedom to define the use of the space and how to present themselves. This unique quality is what defines Canessa Park Gallery and entices so many artists to stage shows there.

Gallery spaces have character. Some, with stark white walls, make the art jump out at you. Some galleries tone the walls to soft warm colors that make the artwork show off less boldly. Few, if any like Canessa, have red brick walls with working gas light lamps left over from a distant era. The art space contained within the brick walls, lit from above by the sky light over the entire gallery space, shows art in an entirely unique way. To my eye, the space creates an intimacy, a desire to really look carefully, at what is on the wall or on the open floor. From above, on the catwalk, looking down on the gallery space, the art can be enjoyed from an entirely different perspective.

A person, who does not want to be named, has maintained an office upstairs for 46 years. This person merely has to look away from the focus of his work, look down and behold a magical presence...what art shows seem to create in the Canessa Park.

The person who does not want to be named, a founder and currently the rock of Canessa Gallery, once worked in the national parks. He wanted Canessa Park Gallery to be a reflection of art in nature. From the shows I have seen there and now the past history I have recently learned about, I would say that Canessa Gallery has far exceeded that person's wildest most optimistic expectations. He's been at it for 46 years meeting artists, drawing them into the Canessa world, staging great art shows, while creating community and good dialogue and environmental awareness the entire way. ♦♦



A photo of the show "Nature in the City" complete with brick walls behind the art.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MIRIAM OWEN

Anyone who truly appreciates these efforts and the existence of Canessa Gallery can contribute to the Canessa Artists Gallery Resource fund by sending donations to:

Canessa Artists Gallery Resource
708 Montgomery Street
San Francisco, CA. 94111
(415) 296-9029
www.canessa.org

THE LITTLE BUS THAT COULD:

By Art Curtis

ALL PHOTOS EXCEPT LOWER LEFT COURTESY ART CURTIS

Many thanks to Art Peterson for bringing this story to *The Semaphore*.

Art Curtis, a third generation San Franciscan, knew he wanted to be a Muni Man since the 1940s when he grew up listening to Market Street Railway streetcars growling past his home.

For 37 1/2 years, until his retirement in 1998, he had a chance to fulfill this childhood dream as a trolley and motor-coach operator, including on the 39-Coit line, and as a cable car conductor and gripman. He followed these behind-the-wheel experiences with service in a series of administrative positions, finishing his career as Muni's chief transit control inspector.

He is now corporate secretary and a member of the Board of Directors of the "Market Street Railway," Muni's nonprofit partner in preserving historic public transit in San Francisco.

In the Beginning

The 39 bus was not the first public transportation on Telegraph Hill. According to cable-car historian Joe Thompson (cable-car-guy.com), beginning in 1884, a funicular railway using two cars attached to a finite cable transported riders the 0.59 miles from Greenwich and Powell to Layman's Pioneer Park Observatory, a large resort at the top of Telegraph Hill. The railway's cable mechanism allowed the down-hill car to counter-balance the uphill car. A shoo-fly allowed them to pass each other in the middle of the line. The steam engine that operated the cable was in the basement of the observatory pavilion. A bad accident and declining patronage resulted in the line being shut

down only two years later in 1886.

Fast Forward to the 20th Century

With the arrival of a fleet of 22 new, 28-foot long, 32-passenger, gasoline-powered White Motor Company coaches in 1938 and 1939, Muni inaugurated several new lines in underserved parts of the city not suited either geographically or economically for streetcar operation. Among these was the "11-Telegraph Hill" line, which began operations with a single coach from Union and Columbus to Telegraph Hill in July 1939. In October 1946, the Union to Montgomery leg was added, and that was the route configuration until 1979.

In February 1949, the line was renamed the "39-Coit." Then in August 1979, the route was extended to Fisherman's Wharf, now requiring two coaches to accommodate the new route and schedule.

An interesting aspect of the post-1946 line was that, because of its short length, the schedule required the operator to make 25 trips in a little more than eight hours. One round trip every 20 minutes! That was a grueling schedule and was rarely adhered to.

The Men of the 39 and Their Customers

It was the personal perspectives and experiences of both the Muni operators and Telegraph Hill residents that added a special flavor to the history of the Coit Tower bus line.

During the time I was operating the night shift on the line in the fall and winter of 1963, the day-shift operator was a very senior employee by the name of Ernie Thompson, a longtime operator on the



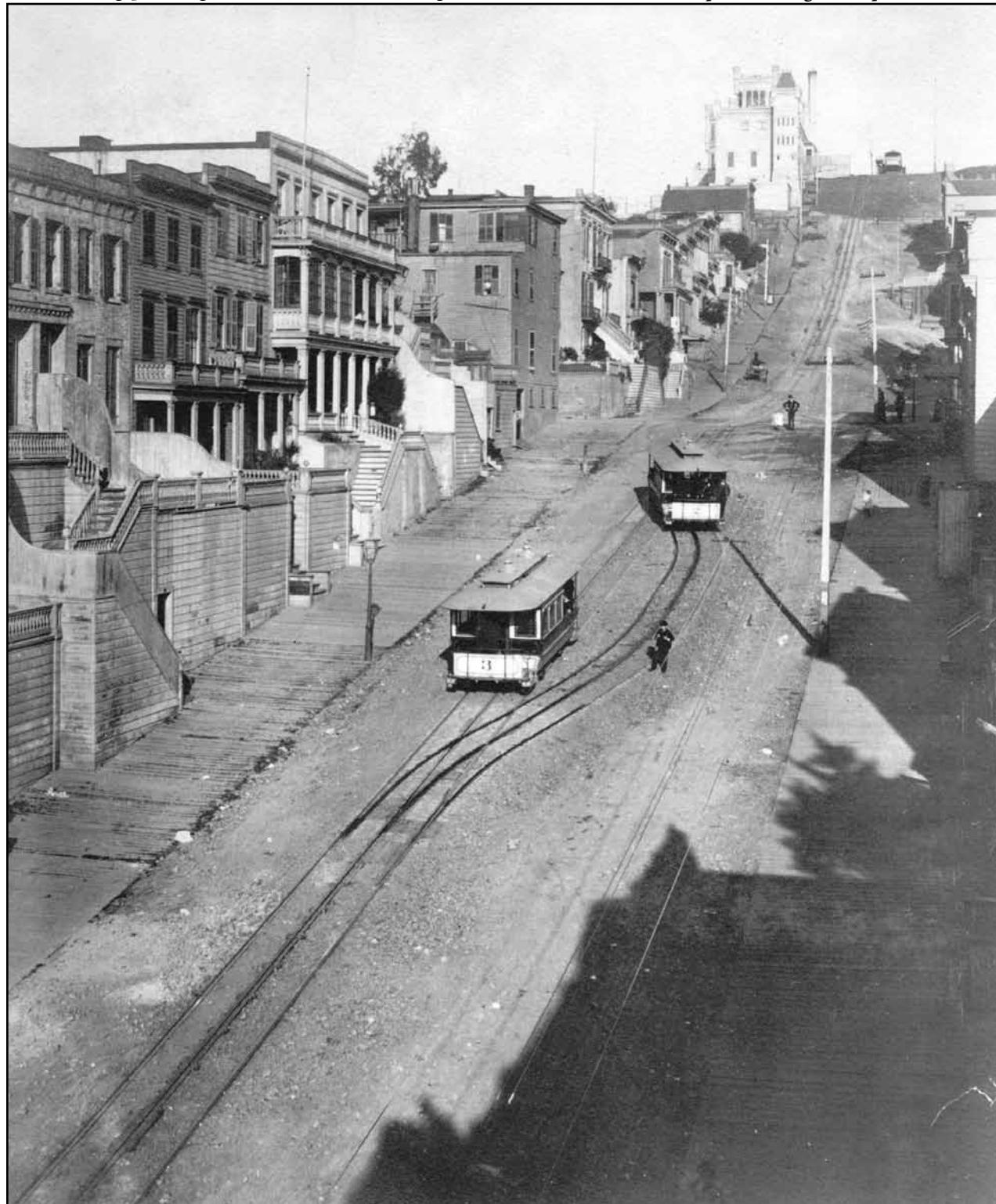
39-line. With voluminous commendations from Hill residents, he achieved the prestigious "Muni Man of the Month" award. He knew all his regular passengers by name, knew their schedules, picked them up in front of their homes -- and grew concerned if they were not there on time, to the point of asking their neighbors if they were OK. Ernie ran the bus based on his passengers' needs rather than on the printed schedule. It was more like a taxi service than a scheduled bus route. He would only operate on schedule if he thought an inspector or traffic checker was watching the line. He allegedly exchanged Christmas presents with some of his passengers. His off-duty hobby was Harley-Davidson motorcycles, and rumor has it that one Christmas the Hill residents got together and purchased him a new Harley. Ernie retired off the 39-line to great fanfare and ceremony from all his regular passengers.

Another operator on the night shift, Joe Lacey in the early '70s, provided this commentary from his time on the 39-line:

The regular passengers on the route dictated the schedule. Thursday was bingo night at Saints Peter & Paul Church. Between 6:30 p.m. and 7 p.m., a number of women would be standing in front of their homes and expected to be picked up and dropped off there, legal coach stop or not. At about 10 p.m., you better be parked in front of the church when bingo broke. On Wednesday evening about 6:30 p.m., a longshoreman and his wife who lived on the Hill expected you to be in front of their home for the trip down hill to their leisurely dinner at Fior d'Italia. You were expected to be there at 10:30 p.m. to take them home! Violation of these and other such "special service" trips would generate phone calls to Muni brass, resulting in an inspector checking the line.

If the weather was warm and lots of people were driving up to the tower you'd be stuck in traffic to the degree that one physical trip to Coit Tower would require you to lose three trips on paper. On these days the coach engine would often overheat, requiring one or two trips to the Kirkland Bus Division at Stockton and North Point (five blocks off the line) for water.

I worked the No. 39-Coit on Friday and Saturday nights, during the years of the 25-trips, eight-hour schedule with a round-trip time of 20 minutes. That's six minutes running each way and four minutes layover at each terminal. I was going to school at the time and needed time to study. You could hardly open a book in four minutes. I discovered that with a somewhat heavier application of power and a little bit harder braking that I could make the entire round trip in eight



Cable Car on Telegraph Hill 1880s.
PHOTO: COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



HISTORIC TALES OF THE 39

minutes, thus giving myself 12 minutes layover at Union and Montgomery, where tourists wouldn't bug me about getting on the bus, and I could get a little studying done.

During those days, we were still operating the last three of the 1939 short White Co. motor coaches, all of which were locked in first gear. Being a young buck in my early 20s, and always looking for a way of doing something different, I discovered one evening that while proceeding down hill if you shut off the motor, then turned it back on 50- or a 100-feet later, you could produce a *very loud* backfire. After doing this a few of times, I was approached by Inspector Bruno Berti at Union and Columbus, who told me he always knew when there was a new, probably young, operator on the line, because of the complaints from residents about the driver backfiring the coach. Because it was a one-coach line at the time, it was pretty hard to deny being the culprit.

Survival of the Fittest

By the early 1960s, the coaches that had been operating since the '30s were getting a little long in the tooth, approaching 25 years of age. Muni picked the three best

of these small coaches to retain for the 39-line and scrapped the rest of that fleet. These three stalwarts would labor on until 1975, when they were retired at the age of 36. They were believed to have been the longest-serving coaches in regular transit service in the United States. There were times when all three coaches were out of service. When this occurred, Muni would provide an inspector's radio car for the operator, who would place a cardboard sign reading 39-Coit in the windshield and service the line.

When Muni decided it had to replace the three coaches, it was presented

with a dilemma. Because of the turn around required in the small, tight intersection of Union and Montgomery, a standard 40-foot coach would have extreme difficulty, especially when cars were parked illegally. It was difficult enough with the short coaches, and Friday and Saturday evenings were especially difficult when Julius' Castle was going strong.

The decision was made was to cut down three mid-1950s era Mack motor coaches from their 40-foot length to about 30 feet. These coaches served until they were replaced in the early '80s by the 35-foot AM General coaches. In 1990, brand new 30-foot Orion motor coaches took over. In 2007, other brand new 30-foot Orions were assigned and operate on the line to this day. Amazingly enough, two of the '30s original coaches still exist, one having been completely restored for the Muni Centennial celebrations.

Big Plans Go Awry

In the late '70s, Muni's Planning Department, feeling that the 39 could be made more useful and productive, came up with a

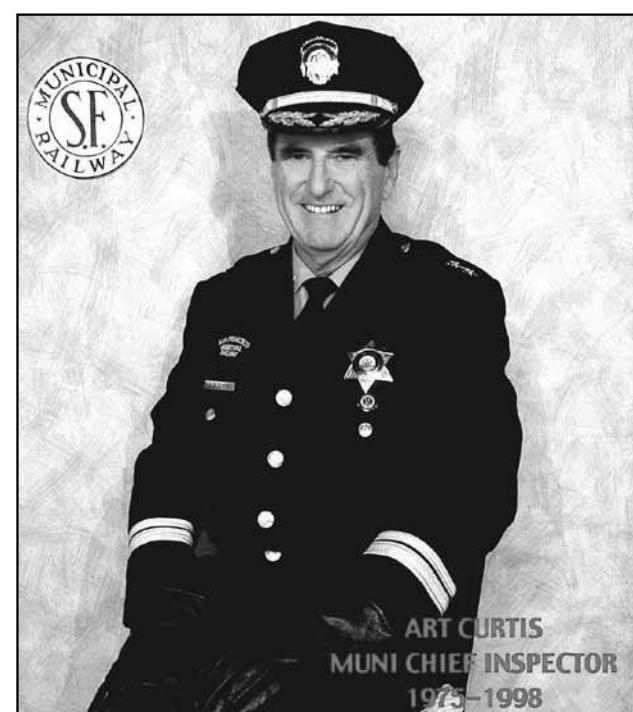


plan to split the line in two.

Tom Matoff of the Planning Department (who coincidentally lived at 429 Greenwich and used the 39) provides the following information:

The plan was to through-route the Union Street leg of the 39 with the then-new 83-Pacific line, providing connections with other Muni lines as far west as Van Ness Avenue. The Coit Tower/Lombard leg would be extended to Fisherman's Wharf.

Well, this did not go over at all well with the Telegraph Hill Dwellers. They had an active Transportation Committee. The chair was a fine fellow and met with us. While he was sympathetic to our overall goals, was a transit progressive and thought getting more ridership was a good idea, he insisted that the Union Street and Lombard legs must not be separated. He said that the Telegraph Hill Dwellers had been formed in the 1950s when the 39 was under threat of abandonment and the group was organized to "Fight City Hall" (a great old San Francisco tradition) and keep Muni service to the Hill. They LOVED that line. He said it was important to the feeling of unity of the Telegraph Hill community that both sides of the Hill be served by one line that was its "own" line, that they had fought for and loved. Whatever else we did to attract more users, that was essential. Keeping this in mind, we proposed that the Fisherman's Wharf leg be grafted onto the combined Union/Lombard route, in more or less the current configuration. The Telegraph Hill



Dwellers supported this concept, and spoke up in favor of the network restructuring plan that was ultimately approved and has remained to this day.

The author welcomes input and corrections at awcurtis@comcast.net.



Look for more stories on the Rails of North Beach in the Spring issue of *The Semaphore*.

SAN FRANCISCO MUNICIPAL RAILWAY MOTOR COACH NO. 042 — BUILT 1938

This 1938 White Company motor coach was restored to like new operating condition by the Municipal Railway's extremely professional and capable maintenance shop for the 1912-2012 Centennial Celebration of the Municipal Railway. Sporting Muni's late 1930s "as-delivered" motor-coach livery of orange and black, the results are truly awesome!

At some point in its career, this coach had been *renumbered* as 062 and spent many years, along with sister coaches nos. 060 and 061, operating on the 39-Coit line, which required a three-point turn-around in the



small intersection of Union and Montgomery streets on the south side of Telegraph Hill. The author of this brief summary had the pleasure of operating these three coaches on the 39-line in the early 1960s.

The *original* coach 062 was delivered to Muni on July 31, 1939. During the extensive 2012 rebuild of 062, however, the original number of 042 was discovered on the chassis and the coach was restored with its original number from 1938.

Provided below are the specifications of White Coach 042 (and its sister coaches 041-043-044) as taken from the Municipal Railway document entitled "Analysis of Rolling Stock - 1939." Note that the length and height were not provided, but these coaches were 28 feet in length. The transmissions were originally mechanical, "stick-shift" transmissions, but were replaced with the White "Hydrotorque" automatic transmissions, similar in operation to the famous Buick "Dynaflow" transmission.

Date Received	March 31, 1938
Make	White
Model	784 - 168-inch wheel base
Cylinders	12
Weight	15,100 pounds
Seating	32 passengers
Tires	9.75 x 20 front and dual rear
Body	Transit coach – center-side exit door
Brakes	Four-Wheel Westinghouse air brake
Cost	\$10,161.32 each

© Art Curtis - 2013

THE GARDENER OF WASHINGTON SQUARE

By Mark Tilley
Gardener, Washington Square
North Beach Section
San Francisco Recreation and Park Department

In His Own Words

After leaving a previous career and earning my certificate in horticulture from Merritt College in Oakland, I was hired at the San Francisco Recreation and Park in July of 2006 and assigned to North Beach section. Having worked in several parks across the section, including Coit Tower, during my time here, and although there have been many challenges along the way, I really love my job.

I started working in the park last spring and already



Mark Tilley

feel very much a part of the community. Washington Square draws a truly diverse cross-section of folks. You can meet people of every conceivable background visiting the park on any given day. The park is the center of neighborhood activity where all the different facets come together to make North Beach a rich and thriving destination. I love working here and take my responsibility to the neighborhood very seriously and with pride. My goal is to make the park clean, safe and beautiful so it is a gathering place we all can enjoy and be proud of.

Since the start of my tenure as the gardener here at Washington Square, I've focused my efforts on continuing the outstanding work of the two preceding gardeners

continued on page 11

By June Fraps

On Dec. 2, 2012, NEXT Village S.F. moved down the hill to the Financial District for a holiday party at Hidden Vine, featuring jazz guitarist Steve Ahern and a bocce ball court. No reports of activity on the court, but 50 or so members, guests and friends enjoyed good music, food and wine as we can see in these photos.

Neighbor-to-neighbor assistance, provided by volunteers, is the



Musician Steve Ahern



Left to right: Nancy McNally, Rhoda Feldman, Vesta Kirby, Sue Siegel, Bob Lee and Jane Winslow

purpose of NEXT Village, serving seniors in the northeast quadrant of the city. To become part of the organization, as a member, volunteer, or simply as a participant in its programs, check out the group's website, www.nextvillages.org.

If you know of some vacant office space NEXT could use, contact Jonee Levy at jonee.levy@gmail.com. ♦



Left to right: Dee Whalen, Lucille Sutton and Howard Wong



ART & CULTURE COMMITTEE

The HeART of North Beach



By Julie Jaycox

North Beach Citizens' Creative Events Committee is presenting "The HeArt of North Beach," an art exhibition taking place from Thursday, February 14, through Saturday, February 16, at Live Worms Gallery at 1345 Grant Ave. in North Beach.

Artists are asked to depict the "heart" of North Beach through their artwork. The opening reception on Valentine's Day is a celebration of the things people love about North Beach; such as the people, places, memories, impressions, history and activist nature of the community. The artists participating include Jack Hirschman, Elizabeth Ashcroft, Richard Zimmerman, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, MoMo, Winston Smith, Genea Barnes and Amanda Lynn.

Alexandra Neidenberg, North Beach Citizens' operations and development assistant, gave me the background story on these annual local fundraising art shows in North Beach:

"We have had three art shows from 2004-2009 in which individual artists featured North Beach Citizens as their theme or inspiration for their show. "The HeArt of North Beach" will be the eighth community art show.

"We started the art shows as a community effort to communicate our mission as a nonprofit and our role in the neighborhood. "Skate this Art" in 2010, with the leadership of gallery owner Ethel Jimenez, was the begin-

ning of successful fundraising for our group shows. During this show, we opened the call to artists for anyone in the community; some of the contributing artists were people who may not be able to donate monetarily, but showed interest in supporting our mission.

"The current art show, the eighth annual art show to benefit North Beach Citizens, 'The HeArt of North Beach,' is focusing on the artist's individual passions that stem from living, working or socializing in North Beach. There is a strong community of artists in the area and they have supported us in the past and we wanted to carry on the tradition of an annual art show. We enjoy this fundraiser because we get the opportunity to interact with various supporters, spread our mission and provide a platform for our clients to become more engaged in their local community, as well as offer them an opportunity to join the art show as artists or volunteers. We are excited to host the art show in the local establishment, Live Worms Gallery."

Purchase local art and support a great community vision!

Drop by Live Worms Gallery for the opening of the show from 6 to 9 p.m. on Thursday, February 14, plus the Friday and Saturday following from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Closing reception is Saturday the 16th from 4 to 8 p.m. ♦



North Beach Citizens presents
THE HEART OF NORTH BEACH
An annual art exhibition and benefit
February 14, 15 & 16
Live Worms Gallery 1345 Grant Avenue Hours: 11am-6pm
OPENING Reception Thursday 14 6 - 9 PM
CLOSING RECEPTION SATURDAY 16 4-8 PM

For more information please contact, creativeevents@northbeachcitizens.org, or 415-772-0918.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION: ETERNAL DEVELOPMENT THREATS TO CHINATOWN, NORTH BEACH AND NORTHEAST WATERFRONT

By Howard Wong, AIA
Founding member, SaveMuni.com and past chair, Telegraph Hill Dwellers' Parking & Transportation Committee

Easily taken for granted by local residents, visitors often gaze awe-struck at the northeast quadrant's ubiquitous public vistas, topographic wonders, geographic splendors, Mediterranean scale, streetscapes, historicism, uniqueness and character, which underlie San Francisco's robust tourist industry that attracts 16 million visitors and \$8.5 billion annually. Unremittingly, real estate speculators, building developers, business associations, politicians, land-use attorneys and public-relations firms have fueled large infrastructure projects, rezoning, densification, gentrification and financial gambits to exploit the neighborhood treasures that development despoils. The legacies of Telegraph Hill Dwellers' and neighborhood activism are forever linked to countless land-use battles, which

preserved the maturation of one of the world's great urban environments.

LOCATION, AVARICE AND DEVELOPMENT

Even within existing zoning codes, the northeast quadrant has an unmet capacity for large development. There are already abundant speculative apartment complexes, characterless buildings, view-blocking high-rises and ruined historic resources. Ellis Act evictions have continued even in a down economy. Nevertheless, powerful special interests will forever attempt to expand building heights, bulk and density through rezoning, variances, use changes, political intrigue and public-relations campaigns. More insidious than bad building projects are public infrastructure projects that pave the way for wholesale development; for example, Washington Square's underground garage, Columbus Avenue freeway, Telegraph Hill freeway, Telegraph Hill bridge, Russian Hill tunnels, northern waterfront free-

way, the Central Subway. If uncontested, the threats to Chinatown and the demolitions of Manilatown, the old Produce Market, Fillmore Jazz District, the Western Addition, Nihonmachi and Yerba Buena will repeat — diminishing diversity, affordability and the City's poetic composition of variety, scale and character.

A NATURAL PEDESTRIAN REALM

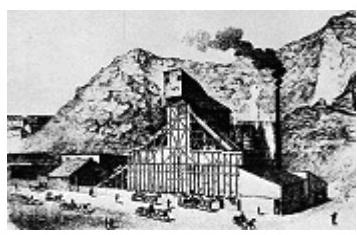
Like Mediterranean hill towns, the northeast quadrant is a walking environment. Pedestrians and transit pass by every storefront, streetscape, view corridor, park and monument — invigorating cafés, restaurants, businesses and events. The distance from downtown to Fisherman's Wharf is only 1½ miles. Columbus Avenue is 1-mile long. Washington Square is one mile from the Powell BART/Muni Metro Station. Chinatown is ½-mile from Market Street. These are ideal distances for a pulsating street life, as well as a human-scale sympathetic with hills, public vistas and San Francisco's world-renowned allure.

LATEST LAND-USE AND DEVELOPMENT THREATS

The Central Subway is more about development and profit than public transit — with inevitable pressures on land-use, affordability, densification and gentrification. Development pressures are bad enough without subway threats that tout commuter links to Caltrain.

"If they build the Subway, it will ensure major, major new development at the stops in Chinatown and North Beach, and in terms of scale, these neighborhoods will never be the same again"

—Allen B. Jacobs, Past S.F. planning director and dean of UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design



Rock quarrying threatened Telegraph Hill and housing from the 1890s to 1909.



Prior to 1906, political and business leaders planned to relocate Chinatown — coveting its prime real estate.



After the 1906 earthquake, Chinatown was slated for removal to Hunters Point.



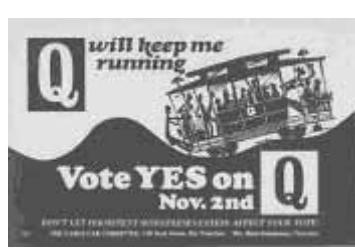
Proposed twin tunnels under Russian Hill, with eight lanes of high-speed traffic.



Proposed bridge from Telegraph Hill to Angel Island to Tiburon—stopped by citizen lobbying to Washington, D.C.



Saving the cable cars required several citizen campaigns.



Saving the cable cars was ballot-box activism, as well as a triumph of citizen activism.



Proposed U.S. Steel high-rise project on the waterfront—adjacent to the Ferry Building.



State highway engineers planned a city-wide freeway network — to speed up traffic, commerce and development.



A new coalition of neighborhood activists rose to pioneer the Freeway Revolt.



The Embarcadero Freeway was stopped in mid-construction — preserving the northern waterfront.



Proposed freeways along Telegraph Hill's eastern and northern slopes.



"Saving the Bay" linked citizens & the environment.



Protests over the demolition of Manilatown were early battles for city affordability.



The I-Hotel stirred a new political awareness.



The Fontana Towers initiated the waterfront 40-foot height limit.



Development battles led to Prop. M, limiting high-rises.



The Central Subway will link commuters to Caltrain — fueling development.



The Victorian Western Addition: A rich social & cultural interconnectivity.



The demolished Western Addition was replaced with urban banality.



The demolition of the Fillmore Jazz District cut off a rich cultural lineage.



Saving Victorian houses stimulated the historic preservation movement.



The Japanese-American community protested the demolition of Nihonmachi.

Already, the Central Corridor/4th Street Plan is being pressured for even higher height limits than proposed by the Planning Department. In October 2008, the planning director convened a neighborhood meeting for a Rezoning Chinatown Study. In 2013, business associations are holding neighborhood meetings for the Central Subway's northern extension. Underlying these planning efforts are ever present development motivations. Instead, hundreds of millions of local dollars from the Central Subway can improve hundreds of miles of Muni routes and streetscapes — quickly and cheaply.

NEIGHBORHOODS WARRANT ETERNAL VIGILANCE

The pretense of progress and urban blight destroyed vibrant neighborhoods, cultural villages and Victorian districts. The privileged few profit, while people lose their communities. If allowed to evolve naturally, those lost neighborhoods would resemble today's Alamo Square, Haight-Ashbury, Hayes Valley, Lower Pacific Heights and Upper Fillmore. Past land-use battles remind us that eternal vigilance is necessary to protect San Francisco's beauty, uniqueness and economic assets for future generations.



The Gardener of Washington Square continued from page 10

ers assigned to this beat, Carol Sionkowsk and Tom O'Conner. Building on their accomplishments, I have taken the opportunity to collaborate with many of the

stakeholders from city agencies and the neighborhood to continue to improve the management of the park.

In the last year, I have worked with the Friends of

Washington Square and the department's reforestation unit to continue the implementation of the tree plan. We removed several sick and hazardous trees and are

continued on page 13

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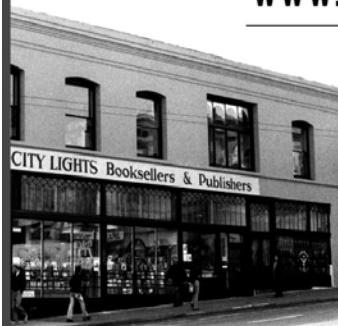


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RESTAURANT REVIEW

WHEN NOT IN ROME, TRY CHIAROSCURO



By Carol Peterson

Chiaroscuro

550 Washington Street
San Francisco, CA 94111
(415) 362-6012

Almost six years ago, Alessandro Campitelli, gazed into the vacant building at 550 Washington and had an epiphany. It was 3:00 p.m. and the Pyramid building across the street cast exquisite shadows into the empty space that would be his new restaurant. The light reminded him of the Italian term "chiaroscuro," the subtle play of light and shadow in some Italian painting. With his restaurant Chiaroscuro, Alessandro is applying this artistic term to gastronomy, mixing flavors with great subtlety.

Alessandro comes from Rome where he studied at the prestigious Istituto Professionale Alberghiero, graduating with a degree in hospitality. He learned the ways of American business by working in American hotels, then went on to hone his fine dining skills at a 3-star Michelin restaurant in Rome. Moving to the United States, he worked at a few restaurants in San Francisco, saving every dime to open his own place. "It was a big chance taking this spot," he told me. "There were no restaurants around me at that time and everyone told me being in the Financial District is tough. It was a rough first two years, but I have now gained the steady clientele I had hoped for and I can't complain. Most of my clients are business people, but my next

goal is to introduce my restaurant to the locals, who are loyal the year out."

As in any fine dining restaurant, the choices at Chiaroscuro are constantly changing. The menu is small and concise, with only around four appetizers, four or five pasta dishes and the same number of entrees.

On one of our visits we shared the crispy veal semolina sweetbreads, with cauliflower puree, artichoke hearts, kale chips and fresh horseradish. The veal was crisp, with a light covering, but inside it was juicy and tender. The creamy cauliflower begged to be scooped up into the homemade bread and the artichoke heart provided a light texture to the dish.

The pasta dishes are a far cry from the spaghetti churned out not too far up the street. Alessandro employs one man whose only job is to make pasta every day. I am a pushover for anything mushroom, so the Vermicelli spoke to me. These round, tender and slippery noodles are tossed with white-truffle infused butter. Sautéed earthy porcini mushrooms, fresh herbs and Golden Valley Pepato cheese join the pasta to create a bold flavor. The white winter truffles are imported from Alba.

My favorite entrée was a difficult choice, but because this Italian restaurant dares to be different, I would recommend the Duet of Rabbit. This includes two forms of rabbit. The delicate piece of tenderloin is wrapped in smoked pancetta and accompanied by rabbit leg confit. The combination of huckleberry goat cheese, grape antique, a chickpea flour cake, compound house butter and rosemary-goat cheese mousse pro-

vided the perfect combination of flavors for a memorable dish.

For dessert, I chose the white chocolate gelato. The embedded tiny bits of coconut were a pleasant surprise to a happy meal ending.

As is my habit, I never review the wines in a restaurant because I don't feel qualified to do so. Give me a hearty Cabernet or a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, both inexpensive and I am very happy. However, if you are a wine connoisseur, Wine Director Paul Robinson will be able to do an excellent pairing for you. My husband tried his recommendations and loved every glass.

Talking to Alessandro about his menu, I mentioned that of all the restaurants I have reviewed, his and Daniel Patterson's COI have been the only ones I know of that make their own butter. He was surprised and flattered that I noticed, but he said, "I have been doing it for years. When you have a restaurant where every dish is defined to perfection, it is only natural you would make your own butter. I just give mine a different twist."

As should be clear from this review, this is a fine dining restaurant with appropriate prices. It's a place to celebrate with an exquisite meal and impressive service. It's a place where if you are planning an event or just a get-together with friends you are presented with your specialty printed menu so you can follow the meal. It's the kind of restaurant where every detail is taken care of as if you are the only guests. It's the royal treatment right here on the borders of North Beach. ☺



By Carlo Arreglo

Over a two-week period around Christmas, thousands of volunteers across the nation participate in the longest-running citizen-science project in the world: the National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count. On December 27th, our neck of the woods, designated as Area 7.2 by the Golden Gate Audubon Society, saw seven participants heading out in brisk, sunny weather to spot and identify birds in North Beach, Telegraph Hill, Chinatown, the waterfront, Russian Hill and portions of Jackson Square and the Embarcadero.

Our day started at 8:30 a.m. at the Coit Tower



THD Christmas Bird Count Team

Left to right: Lee, Elizabeth, Sheila, Paul, Carlo
Not pictured: Amy and Joe

PHOTO CREDIT: BOTH PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF CARLO ARREGLO

South Lawn, the grassy area just south of Coit Tower with views of the Bay Bridge and frequented by regulars going through vigorous morning exercise routines. We spotted Yellow-rumped Warblers, Townsend's Warblers, Pygmy Nuthatches and Hermit Thrushes in the mixed habitat of native plants, ornamentals and flowering eucalyptus trees. We did see a bird that stumped us and nearly gave us a heart attack as we excitedly thought SNOW BUNTING! But the chances of sighting this bird, which nests on high-Arctic rocky tundra, would have been as likely as an actual theater going up in the Pagoda Theatre site. The bird in question turned out to be a leucistic Fox Sparrow,

not a true albino, but possessed with enough reduced pigmentation to provide a dump of adrenaline in our veins thinking we would score the bird find of the day.

Our initial group of seven split into three groups and we spotted notables such as Varied Thrush, Red-throated Loon, Pine Siskin, and Red-breasted Nuthatch. Close to 4:30 p.m., two of us walked to Sue Bierman Park to re-convene with two other team members when a lone bird on the ground



Palm Warbler

near a water drain by the Golden Gate tennis courts caught our eye. Sparrow-size and drabish, but yellow

undertail coverts and foraging in grass? Darkish eyeline? PALM WARBLER!

Some quick photos and the completion of a Rare Bird report with written descriptions to support our find of this rarity from the East Coast and we were stoked. Unfortunately, the folks we met at Sue Bierman did not get on the Palm Warbler. A Red-shouldered Hawk sighting provided a final thrill, then we headed to a copy shop by Sydney Walton Square. It was here that the four of us were flabbergasted to see not one, but TWO, Palm Warblers foraging in the grass on the west side of this urban park. Smiles all around, especially on the faces of Elizabeth and Sheila as they had come all the way from the East Bay to participate.

We finished the day with 48 species. I proudly represented our neck of the woods at the Golden Gate Audubon Society dinner that night, energized from the day and humbled to be part of an annual project that started 112 years ago. The Christmas Bird Count demonstrates that participating in the natural world

does not necessarily mean trekking to what John Muir called a cathedral in the woods. If we can think of the out-of-doors as our study, as Henry David Thoreau put it, we can simply step outside our doors and immerse ourselves in a state of wonder and engagement at the avifauna in our lives, at nature right here in the city.

Special thanks to Lee Bruno, Joe Butler, Sheila Dickie, Amy Loewen, Elizabeth Sojourner and Paul Weaver

for being such energetic and precise participants!

The Gardener of Washington Square continued from page 11

almost finished replacing them tree for tree. I have also been working with the Recreation and Park turf crew to improve the condition of the most important feature of the park.

What would Washington Square be without that beautiful expanse of green in the midst of urban clutter? I have conducted several volunteer projects, two of

which included members of the Friends of Washington Square, to improve the perennial beds and clean up the Stockton Street side of the park. Working closely with Officer Fred Crisp of the SFPD, we reduce the amount of damage, vandalism, litter and other types of illegal activity. I have worked with gardening volunteers from the recovery, support and outreach organization North

Beach Citizens. I have participated in meetings with Recreation and Park management staff, architects and the public to review the designs of the new restrooms slated to be built within the next couple years. Finally, I have worked closely with Carol Sionkowski, our new park section supervisor, and our permit office to ensure that we are able to strike a balance between the desires

continued on page 14

NORTH BEACH BLACKOUTS

By Ruth Gottstein

It was the early days in World War II, and we in San Francisco were becoming aware of just how much we were on the domestic front line of potential attack.

My husband Howard and I had a charming little studio apartment at 456 Vallejo, and were enjoying North Beach life. As we both had dark eyes and dark hair, we were frequently addressed in Italian as we walked through the neighborhood. Life was good. Then, one night, sirens sounded as if they were coming from under our feet, and we experienced one of the few blackouts that took place in the City. As we had been instructed, our windows were covered, but then we realized we had no food. We hadn't planned for what was happening. In the darkness, we crept down the hill to Toto's pizzeria, which I believe was the first of its kind in San Francisco. It was the real thing -- underground in a building on Columbus Avenue. Sure enough, pizzas were popping out of the brick oven, Toto busy at work. Up the hill we crept, holding a big cardboard box of heavenly pizza, and sat in our dark room devouring it. The blackout was of short duration, but it sure was *real*.

In an upcoming article, I will write about working a swing shift in a small machine shop located at what was then the terminal for the East Bay trains at Second Street, and again -- experiencing a blackout. By then,



December 1941 - Unidentified Italian North Beach restaurant during WW II blackout.

PHOTO CREDIT: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Howard was in the service and I lived at 126 Macondray Lane, in a tiny cottage. How I got home? Therein lies the tale ...

More on blackouts in San Francisco

The editor found two citations regarding World War II blackouts in San Francisco.

The source is "The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco." The website link is: <http://www.sfmuseum.org/war/42.html>. The citations read as follows:

"As these and other forces took up their defensive positions, coastal communities suffered from an 'invasion fever,' which first showed itself with the calling of an alert in San Francisco on 8 December. In the afternoon of the 8th, rumors of an enemy carrier off the coast led to the closing of schools in Oakland. That evening, while residents of the Bay Area were having dinner, radio broadcasting suddenly ceased, and this was followed by a blackout which lasted nearly three hours. In the absence of adequate preparations, sirens on police cars were used to warn the people, and self-appointed neighborhood wardens rushed from door to door to help enforce the blackout."

"May 3, 1942 — Gen. DeWitt issues evacuation instructions to persons of Japanese ancestry in Los Angeles. San Francisco blackout ordered because of an unidentified target that later turned out to be friendly. The 45-minute blackout was the eighth of the war."



THD BOARD MEETING MOTIONS FOR OCTOBER 2012–DECEMBER 2012

By Andy Katz
THD Recording Secretary

10/12 THD Board Meeting Minutes:

Motion: THD will write a letter in opposition to the violation of Proposition K and the shadows which will be cast on parks as a result of the proposed Transbay Terminal Tower.

(Passes Unanimously)

Motion: THD supports the Fix MUNI First resolution regarding MUNI on time rates and the Central Subway.

(Passes Unanimously)

11/12 THD Board Meeting Minutes:

No motions

12/12 No THD Board Meeting

TWO GREAT SOCIAL EVENTS TO END 2012

By Jon Golinger

THD members gathered for two special events to close out the year.

In November, 80 THD members enjoyed a fine dinner at the San Francisco Italian Athletic Club, a report on organizational affairs and programs from THD President Jon Golinger and a superb talk by author and historian Gray Brechin. With both the Golden Gate Bridge and Bay Bridge recently celebrating their 75th anniversaries, Brechin spoke knowledgeably and passionately about the impact of these powerful structures on the evolving landscape of the Bay Area.

THD members were also treated to a surprise treat and welcome visit by Susie Coit Williams, Mike Coit and other descendants of Lillie Hitchcock Coit, who had visited Coit Tower earlier in the day. The Coits were joined at Coit Tower and the THD dinner by Ruth and Adam Gottstein, the daughter and grand-

son of Coit Tower mural artist and organizer Bernard Zakheim. They thanked the THD membership for rallying behind the preservation of Coit Tower and applauded the efforts to restore and protect the historic New Deal era frescoes from the damage and neglect they have endured for far too long.

In December, more than 60 THD members clinked glasses, savored delicious hors d'oeuvres and listened to lively Latin music at Pena Pachamama on Powell Street at the annual THD Holiday Party. Many thanks go to Sarah Kliban for organizing this festive event to celebrate a memorable 2012.

2013 NOMINATING COMMITTEE IS LOOKING FOR NEW THD BOARD MEMBERS

Do you know a Telegraph Hill Dweller member, renter or owner, who would make an effective member of our organization's Board of Directors? Several board positions will be open on the 2013-2014 board and the Nominating Committee would like to meet and talk with any interested, potential candidates. The slate of new directors will be presented to the general membership for election in April. We need your suggestions ASAP!

- In thinking about someone you might nominate, please keep in mind the following:
- The board is a hands-on, all-volunteer, active group of people and a certain time commitment is essential. Directors must be an active part of one or more of THD's committees, such as Planning & Zoning, Waterfront, Parks, Trees & Birds, Parking & Transportation, Social, Membership, Oral History Project, Art & Culture, or The Semaphore – where the real work gets done.
 - The board meets once a month and meetings usually last three to four hours. In addition to board meetings and committee work, directors participate in THD's social events, attend hearings at City Hall and get involved in other neighborhood activities. The more time and energy they have, the better!
 - Candidates to the board should be interested in our neighborhood's architecture and history, appreciate the neighborhood's cultural diversity, be interested in our parks and open spaces and in the vitality of our commercial areas, and be able to enthusiastically support THD's efforts to preserve and enhance our neighborhood's special character.

There are at least three or four board positions to be filled (of 17 total positions) this year. Of particular interest in our search will be THD members interested in organizing and running the annual ArtWalk event, reviving THD's Oral History Project, overseeing THD's archives, or managing THD membership records.

THD's Bylaws state: "members shall be residents of the defined area of Telegraph Hill and members in good standing. This shall include representation from all four major sections of the Hill and a reasonable balance between resident property owners and resident tenants."

Please e-mail your suggestions to nomcom@thd.org and include the nominee's home address and an e-mail or telephone contact where she or he can be reached, and a bio if available. If you believe you are the right person for the job, please feel free to nominate yourself.

Thank you for helping us find new directors for the THD board.

— 2013 THD Nominating Committee



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The Gardener of Washington Square continued from page 13

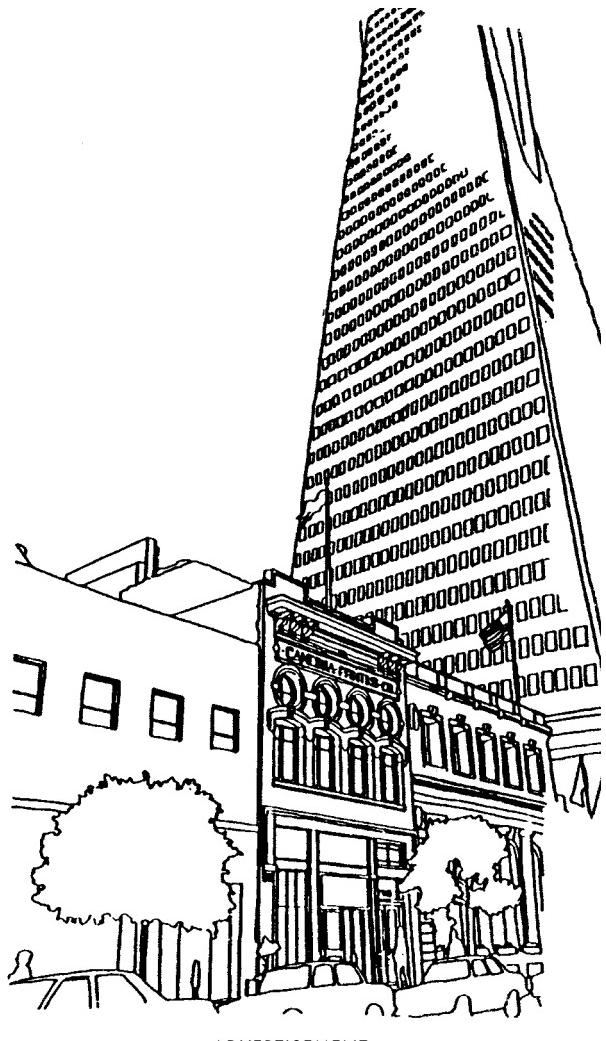
of event planners and the needs of the general public.

As I look forward to the next year, I hope to continue to facilitate the improvements that we achieved through all our efforts. My belief is that by working

together we can sustain Washington Square's status as one of the best parks to visit in the country, if not the globe. If you happen to be at the park between 7 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and you see me

out working in my bright green vest, please feel free to say hello and share your thoughts.





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THD COMMITTEES NEED YOU
Get involved in our neighborhood and make a difference! Contact a THD committee and help keep the Hill a special place to live.

STANDING COMMITTEES

ART & CULTURE: Chair Julie Jaycox. Organizes events and projects that celebrate the art and humanities of our neighborhood. Contact Julie at Julie.Jaycox@thd.org

BUDGET: Chair Tom Noyes. Contact Tom at Tom.Noyes@thd.org

COMMUNICATIONS: Chair Jon Golinger. Contact Jon at Jon.Golinger@thd.org

MEMBERSHIP: Chair Lucie Faulkner. Contact Lucie at Lucie.Faulkner@thd.org

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT: Director, Carlo Arreglo. Contact Carlo at Carlo.Arreglo@thd.org

PARKING & TRANSPORTATION: Chair Mike Sonn. Supports efforts to ease congestion, optimize neighborhood parking, and enhance public transit. Contact mike.sonn@thd.org

PARKS, TREES & BIRDS: Chair Carlo Arreglo. Promotes projects to support neighborhood parks, green spaces, street trees, and birds. Contact Carlo at Carlo.Arreglo@thd.org

PLANNING & ZONING: Co-Chairs Nancy Shanahan & Mary Lipian. Reviews and monitors proposed development projects for consistency with applicable laws and neighborhood character. Contact Nancy at Nancy.Shanahan@thd.org or Mary at Mary.Lipian@thd.org

SEMAPHORE: Editor Catherine Accardi. Contact Catherine at Catherine.Accardi@thd.org

SOCIAL & PROGRAM: Chair Lynn Sanchez. Organizes neighborhood social events, group dinners, and quarterly membership meetings. Contact Lynn at Lynn.Sanchez@thd.org

WATERFRONT: (open) Works to enhance and protect our unique and historic waterfront.

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FRIENDS OF WASHINGTON SQUARE LIAISON: (open)

NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK LIAISON: Gerry Crowley

NORTHEAST WATERFRONT ADVISORY GROUP MEMBER: Jon Golinger

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WEB SITE = www.thd.org
Visit the THD website to explore a wealth of neighborhood history and get the latest information about what's happening on the Hill.

TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS
Schedules of Committee Meetings

PLANNING & ZONING: Last Thursdays. Call for time and location. 986-7070, 563-3494, 391-5652.

Look to the THD website for information on THD events. **Log on to <http://www.thd.org>**

THD Welcomes New Members

THD would like to **welcome** Mauricio Vergara, Peter Fortune, Richard Slota, and Cole Bonner as our most recent new members. We look forward to their participation in THD.

And we would like to thank the following people for their recent donations to the THD General Operating Fund: Alan Resnick, Timothy Ferris & Carolyn Zecca, George & Brenda Jewett, Carla & Phillip Reed and Mauricio Vergara. We are grateful for your thoughtfulness and generosity.

NEW MEMBER INFORMATION

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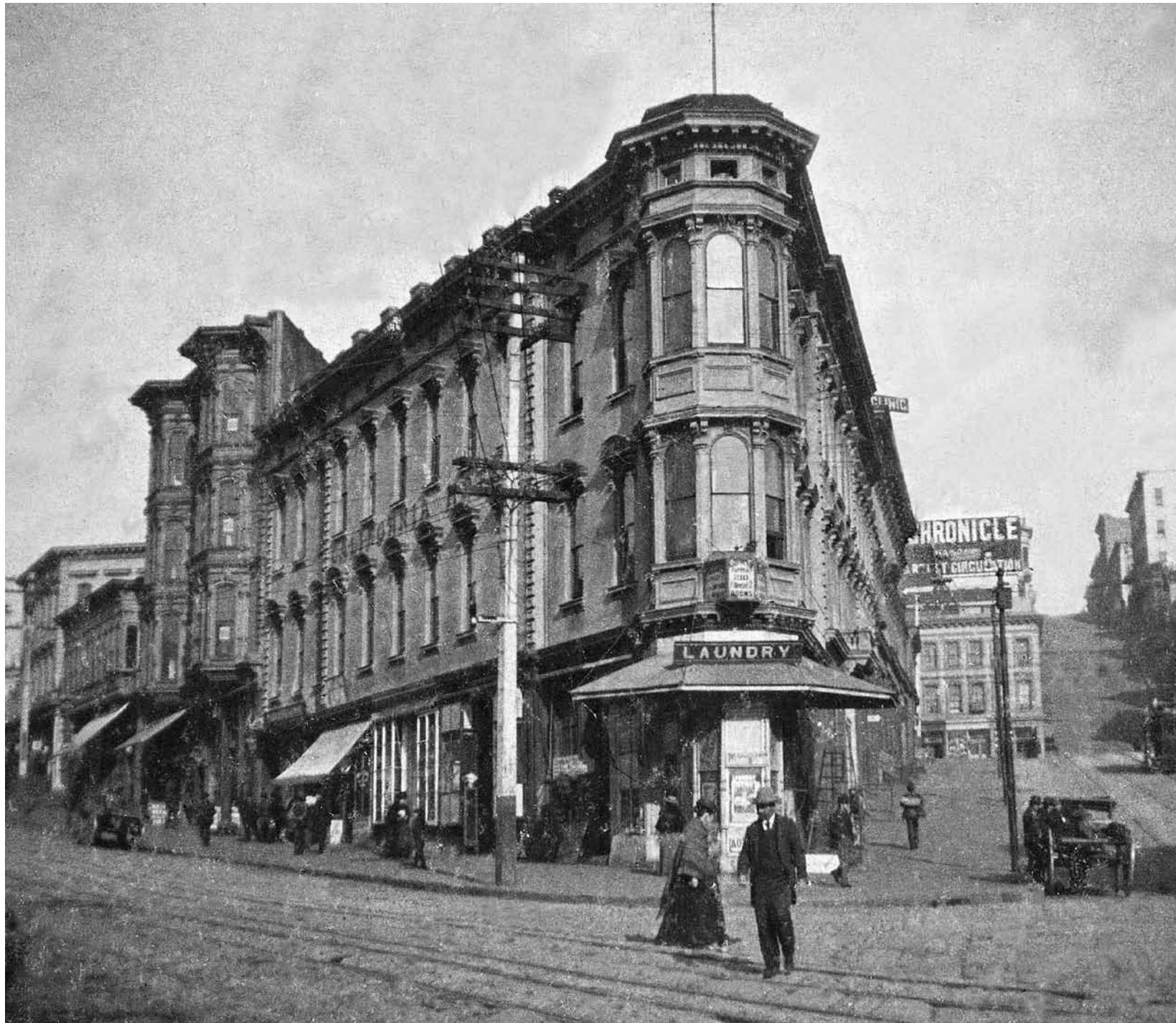
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The Semaphore

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Issue 201
Winter 2013



Gateway to North Beach

At the beginning of the 20th century, the intersection of Kearny and Montgomery was called "The Gateway to North Beach". At that time, Columbus Avenue was called Montgomery. The name was changed in 1909.

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